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SOUTHERN STAR
MYSURU

Hoteliers anxious about new guidelines

- Karnataka to open hotels, places of worship from June 1; Centre's direction awaited
- Open tourist spots too as hotels depend on travel industry, demand stakeholders

Bengaluru/Mysuru, May 29 (KMS,RK&BCT)- Good news for devotees in Karnataka as the State Government has decided that all Temples, Churches and Mosques will re-open from June 1. Similarly, the State will also allow restaurants and hotels, gymnasiums and fitness clubs to re-open. However, the final decision regarding these steps will rest on the guidelines released by the Centre at the end of May.

The decision to re-open hotels and places of worship came after a Cabinet meeting held yesterday where all the Ministers were of the unanimous opinion that hotels, gyms and temples must be open according to guidelines.

"Temples will open from June 1, but totally, it needs permission from the Prime Minister. I have written to him and I am expecting that permission will be given," Yediyurappa told reporters yesterday. "And if Temples are allowed, then Mosques and Churches will also open. The law is the same for all."

The CM made a case for hotels and restaurants to open by pointing out that people from other States were coming in large numbers. "Hundreds and thousands of people are coming from outside. Without hotels, they won't have food and rooms. I've written to the PM about this. As soon as we get permission, we will open hotels," he said.

Hoteliers, however, are keeping their fingers crossed as the Centre has to issue guidelines. They want even tourist destinations to open from June 1. "Apart from regular customers, most of the hotels in Mysuru survive on tourism, travel and hospitality sector. What is the point in opening hotels and keeping tourist destinations closed? Tourism must be allowed and of course, all COVID-19 precautions must be taken," said Mysuru Hotel Owners Association President C. Narayanagowda.

(See HOTELIERS on page 6)

COVID RELIEF

Woman gives away Rs. 500 of Rs. 600 monthly pension

Herself a beneficiary of food packets distributed by Rotary Heritage Mysuru, 70-year-old Kamalamma had lost her job as house maid due to age factor during COVID lockdown.

Mysuru, May 29 (MTY&BCT)- The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the livelihoods of crores of people into a chaotic twister. Migrant labourers, daily wagers and footpath vendors have all had their only source of income snuffed out by the lockdown.

While many celebrities and politicians donated money, food and relief materials and filmed, photographed themselves while doing so, there are people who genuinely provided monetary assistance to the poor. Here is a story of a woman, who is poor herself and who has given away Rs. 500 of her Rs. 600 monthly pension to food-supplying volunteers.

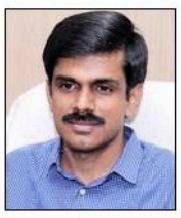
Though the contribution might seem negligible, it is really big for the woman who earns a livelihood by working as a housemaid. She is 70-year-old Kamalamma, a resident of Chennagirikoppalu near K.G. Koppal. As the COVID crisis unfolded, she lost her job as house owners told her not to work in their houses anymore considering her age factor.

Though she had two sons, Kamalamma was leading a self-reliant life and was not dependant on anyone even after her husband's death. She gets a Government pension of Rs. 600 a month and had no means for food during lockdown.

(See WOMAN on page 6)

Two more COVID-19 positive cases in Mysuru

They are already quarantined persons from Rajasthan and Ireland



Abhiram Sankar

Mysuru, May 29- After a gap of over a week, two new COVID-19 positives were reported in Mysuru this morning. Now the cumulative number of positive cases has risen to 94. A 26-year-old man having a travel history to Rajasthan and another aged 28 years and from Ireland are the two new cases. The duo have been shifted to the Isolation Ward in the designated Hospital on KRS Road. Both the cases were under institutional quarantine and there is no threat of the infection spreading further.

As per the data released by the Mysuru Deputy Commissioner Abhiram Sankar, 91 persons have been cured of the disease and at present, there are three patients who are being treated at the Hospital.

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to all CM on the way forward and elicited their views on restrictions to be continued and further relaxations they would need. Today morning he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and informed him about the views of Chief Ministers on the extension of the ongoing nationwide lockdown beyond May 31, officials said.

STAR PUNCH

By Satish Acharya

Blame it on virus: Future tense for farmers in distress

Progressive farmer from Mysuru loses hope on getting back his money invested in Cavendish and Zarbera cultivation

Cucumber ready for sale.

Healthy Cavendish Banana.

The destroyed banana plantation.

By Y.D. Shekar

Mysuru, May 29- With the nationwide lockdown for over two months, farmers who cultivated vegetables, flowers and fruits are facing massive distress due to disruptions in supply chains of the agriculture sector. Higher costs of harvesting and transportation, fall in prices and demand, closure of majority of markets and so on, has caused farmers to lose thousands of crores in the last six to seven weeks, observers estimate.

While farmers' organisations are demanding the Central and State Governments to rescue the farmers from the sudden distress and compensate their losses, according to reports, horticulture farmers who cultivated perishables are engulfed in losses. The fall in demand for vegetables and fruits is also due to the closure of hotels and restaurants across the country.

Transportation and sale have become a challenge and heavy restrictions imposed on APMC yards, the sale of fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses have all taken a hit landing farmers in heavy losses. With unseasonal rains already beginning, procurement of seeds and fertilisers in time for sowing is a new challenge.

Somashekhar, an enterprising farmer of Talur in Mysuru taluk told 'Star of Mysore' that he had grown 3,000 stalks of Yelakki and Cavendish variety of banana in a 2.5-acre area spending about Rs. 3 lakh. But due to lockdown, he could not find suitable market and had to sell 4 tonnes of bananas at just Rs. 18,000 per tonne, which means a paltry Rs. 18 per kg, considering the farm costs.

Adding to his woes, about 1,500 banana stalks were destroyed by strong winds and thunderstorms that struck the village last week. Besides, he stands to lose lakhs of rupees more as Zarbera flowers which he had grown in his farmland after setting up a poly-house at a cost of nearly Rs. 30 lakh, have withered as there is no demand and buyers for this flower which is widely used for decorative purposes in functions and marriages.

Pointing out that he returned to his village after working in several private companies in Mysuru for years, Somashekhar said that his entire family engaged in farming and he used to get good returns in the past few years. "But the lockdown, coupled with nature's fury, has indulged a severe blow. My last hope was Zarbera flowers and with no events and marriages anywhere, the loss has become heavy to bear this year," he said and added that he has lost hope of getting back his money spent on cultivation in the near future.

Somashekhar with his Yelakki Banana crop.

He said that he had grown Mangaluru Cucumber (Mogem Losun Miri) in about 10 guntas of land. Last year, the vegetable sold at Rs. 10 per kg but this time he could sell it just for Rs. 2 per kg which is not enough even to meet the expenses he had incurred for cultivation. He further said that he has also grown tomato and gourd, but he has no hope of getting a good price for them too.

Highlighting that he has adopted organic farming practices in cultivation, he maintained that he uses chemical fertilisers and pesticides only in inevitable circumstances. Emphasising on the importance of having a farm pond in every farm he said that he has built one in his farm at a cost of Rs. 1.20 lakh. During rains, water that falls on the poly-house flows into this pond and thus no rain water goes waste, he said.

The Zarbara flowers that have remained unsold.

The pond that has been built to store rain water.

Co-op. Minister directs review of financial standing of DCC Banks

Somashekar

Bengaluru, May 29- With irregularities and misappropriation of funds in several DCC (District Central Co-operative) Banks coming to the fore, Co-operation Minister S.T. Somashekar on Tuesday directed officials to undertake grading of the banks by independent private agencies or NABARD.

He was speaking at a progress review meeting with top officials of the Department during which the functioning and problems of DCC Banks and Apex Banks were discussed.

Stressing on the need for a singular review of all DCC Banks in the State, Somashekar said it is important to know the financial standing of every bank and its current status.

Pointing out that the time has come for grading banks depending upon their functioning and financial standing, he said that it was equally important to know the agricultural lending and recovery procedures in detail in respect of every bank.

Maintaining that a report along with supporting data is key for understanding the financial position of DCC Banks, he said that such reports will also help in unearthing any financial irregularities and scams.

Underlining the need for taking stringent action against those involved in misappropriation of funds, the Minister instructed the officials to empower officers to impound properties of all those indicted in misappropriation of funds and other irregularities in Banks.

Emphasising on the need for periodic audit of all Co-operative Institutions including VSSN (Vyavasaya Seva Sahakara Niyamitha) and Primary Agricultural Credit Co-operative Societies, he said that vigilance squads will be formed to maintain transparency in their functioning.

Somashekar was apprised of the alleged Rs.92 crore scam in Kalaburagi DCC Bank, following which the Minister asked the officials to conduct an investigation and submit a report. The Minister also ordered superseding of the DCC Bank Board of Directors and appointment of Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner as the Administrative Officer.

Later, the Minister reviewed the progress of MCDCC (Mysore and Chamarajanagar District Co-operative Central) and Mandya DCC Banks. Co-operation Department Principal Secretary Nagalambika Devi, Registrar Prasanna Kumar, Apex Bank officials and other Department staff were present.

VOICE OF THE READER

Property tax collection: MCC must streamline procedures

Sir,

The property tax collection by MCC has not been planned properly and there is no coordination between the Corporation and the bankers who receive the amounts at the counters.

By avoiding online acceptance for one more year with lame excuses of COVID-19, the MCC continues to inconvenience the tax-payers by making them wait for the current year's tax SAS statement and later to stand in long queues to pay the tax at the Bank counters.

Based on the previous year's experience, they could have properly assessed the number of people who come for paying the taxes to avail rebate and make arrangements at all stages, like speeding up of the issuing of current year's SAS statement in just one or two days, to ask the bankers to provide sufficient number of cash counters to avoid the rush. Also more nationalised bank branches should be authorised to collect the amounts.

Without bothering about the difficulties of the public, most of them senior citizens, the MCC has gone ahead with the tax collection work, which looks to be shabby and reflects the poor show of the civic administration.

To avoid rush at MCC Office, the Residents Association of SBM Colony, Srirampura, took the initiative to collect the SAS of previous year of about 70 residents and got the computerised current SAS statements and wherever there were discrepancies of tax amount compared to previous year, were verified and scrutinised by the Revenue officials concerned. And finally when these 70 cheques collected for each SAS statement were submitted to the lone cash counter, the cashier at the counter refused to accept the 70 cheques amounting to Rs.3.50 lakh as it would involve more time and asked the individual member to stand in queue and get their work done.

This was brought to the notice of Zonal Assistant Commissioner and others who assured to look into matter but are yet to receive the cheques. The concerned banks should be asked to provide more cash counters to ease the situation. They may also facilitate payment of taxes at their other Bank branches also to avoid queues.

As regards the discrepancies in the current year's SAS computerised statement, lot of complaints from the residents were raised against huge enhancements with serious discrepancies like, i) though there was no I floor of a house, tax has been calculated for the first floor also and added, ii) though the house has teakwood doors for front and puja rooms only, rates for all teakwood doors for the whole house is calculated, iii) though the house has granite floor only on ground and glazed tiles for the I floor, rates of granite for both floors has been noted etc.

The MCC is requested to review the current year's data and wherever such discrepancies are pointed out by the residents, should be scrutinised and rectified accordingly before accepting the amounts, as the computerised data would be the permanent basis on which tax calculations would be made for future also.

On the whole, the MCC Commissioner is requested to review the serious situation and streamline the procedure to allow more people to remit taxes. If not done immediately, the tax- payers would not mind the 5% rebate which involves above problems, and would prefer to pay at any other time during the year before next March without much difficulty, by which the MCC will be the loser.

— K.V. Ramanath, Secretary, Mysore Bank Colony Residents' Cultural and Welfare Association

Srirampura II Stage 28.5.2020

UPOR and PID: Why this duplication?

Sir,

Years back the Revenue Department introduced Urban Property Ownership Record (UPOR) in Mysuru to provide a Property Register (PR) card for every property owner.

Now when we collect the payment challan of taxes from MCC, we find a new number allotted called PID (Property Identification Number). But both these numbers are different.

Soon, MUDA will have a third number for property owners!

When will our authorities learn not to duplicate? Each activity costs crores to the exchequer; in turn it is tax-payers money, down the drain!!

— A.V. Prasanna

Mysuru 26.5.2020

Online Seva begins at MM Hills Temple

Devotees can perform various Sevas to the deity and have darshan via www.mmhillstemple.com

Chamarajanagar, May 29 (SS&KS)- Male Mahadeshwara Temple, one of the prominent temples in the State, located atop Male Mahadeshwara Hills at Hanur taluk in Chamarajanagar district, has commenced online seva to devotees from Wednesday.

Following COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, all places of worship were closed and devotees were barred from offering puja. There are crores of devotees waiting for the temple to reopen and the Male Mahadeshwara Hills Development Authority has now made a facility where the devotees can have the darshan of the deity and offerings could be made online.

Devotees can log in to MM Hills Development Authority's website *www.mmhillstemple.com* between 4 am and 5.30 pm and also from 6.45 pm to 8 pm, every day to offer puja and have darshan.

Prasadam by post

Devotees in the State, who book their sevas and offer special pujas in their names online can avail the prasadam (bilvapatre, vibhuti and dry grapes) by post, according to Jayavibhavaswamy, Secretary of MM Hills Development Authority.

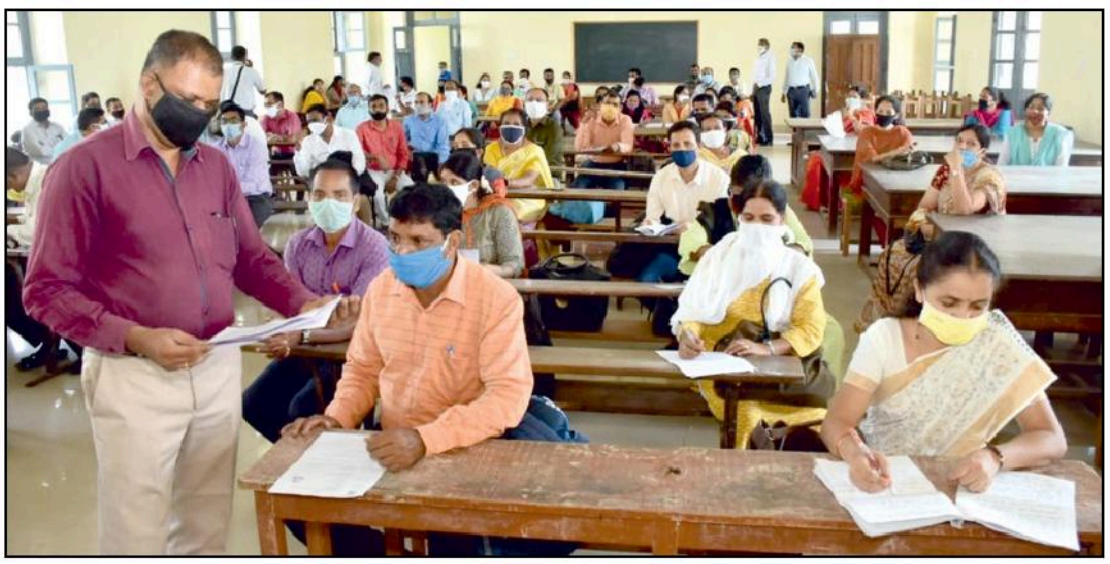
Rates for each seva

The following are the rates fixed by the Authority for each seva. Pancha Kalasa Navarathna Kireetadharane: Rs. 600; Ekadashavaara Rudrabhisheka: Rs. 300; Navarathna Kireetadharane: Rs. 750; Rudrabhisheka: Rs. 300; Ashtotara Bilwarchane: Rs. 300; Panchamrutha Abhisheka: Rs. 300; Illumination for one hour: Rs. 1,200; 30 minutes: Rs. 750; 15 minutes: Rs. 500; Huli Vahana, Belli Vahana and Basava Vahana seva: Rs. 200.

In order to maintain social distancing, *Maharudrabhisheka, Rudra Trishathaka*, Naming ceremonies, Laddu Seva, Kajjaya Seva, Bangarada Rathotsava, Sankashtahara Chaturti and Urottina Seva, Anna Brahmotsava Seva have been cancelled.

Secretary Jayavibhavaswamy said that though various sevas were available online from before, it is for the first time that devotees were being offered darshan of the deity online. A lot of devotees made use of the opportunity on Wednesday and Thursday and had the darshan of the deity, he added.

Evaluation of all II PUC papers begins in city



Mysuru, May 29 (RK&DM)- The Mysuru Divisional evaluation of Second PUC (2019-20) answer scripts of all subjects of all the three streams — Arts, Science and Commerce — began in the city this morning under tight Police security.

The evaluation is taking place at nine centres namely Sarada Vilas College in Krishnamurthypuram, St. Philomena's College in Bannimantap, Marimallappa educational Institutions, Maharani's PU College on N.S. Road, Maharaja PU College on JLB Road, Vidyavardhaka College on Seshadri Iyer Road, Vijaya Vittala College in Saraswathipuram, Mahajana College in Jayalakshmipuram and Gopalaswamy PU College at Nanjumalige.

Lecturers from the five districts of Mysuru Division — Mysuru, Mandya, Hassan, Chamarajanagar and Kodagu — are attending the evaluation work at the nine centres which began at 10 am today.

Barring English and Economics, the evaluation of answer scripts of all other subjects of II PUC of all the three streams are taking place at the city centres.

While the exam for English paper which was earlier scheduled to take place on Mar.23 was postponed following the COVID-19 lockdown, the evaluation of Economics paper which began simultaneously on a Trial and Error basis at all District Head Quarters of the State on Mar.21 due to lockdown travel restrictions, has been completed. The pending English paper exam has now been re- scheduled to take place on June 18.

The evaluation is taking place in compliance with lockdown regulations such as wearing of face mask, maintenance of social distancing, use of hand sanitisers and maintenance of tidiness at the centres.

Mysuru DDPUE G.R. Geetha visited all the centres this morning for an inspection. The evaluation will take place from 10 am till 5 pm on all days. Lecturers from other districts of Mysuru Division can now travel in KSRTC buses to their respective centres as travel restrictions have been eased following the relaxation of lockdown 4.0 regulations.

Greens oppose road inside Talacauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

Trees marked to be cut, concrete pillars laid; activists threaten to move Courts

Madikeri, May 29 (BCT)- The Forest Department and the Public Works Department's move to erect concrete pillars and marking of trees to construct a proposed road from Patti to Todikana within the Talacauvery Wildlife Sanctuary near Talacauvery in Kodagu District has drawn the ire of environmentalists who have called for immediate stopping of road works in a protected area.

In a letter to T. Heeralal, Conservator of Forests, Mysuru Circle and S. Prabhakaran, Deputy Coservator of Forests (territorial and in-charge wildlife), the Trustees of Wildlife First K.M. Chinnappa and A.A. Poovaiah have termed the road works illegal and violates Supreme Court order on National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

The letter's copy has also been sent to Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), and Kodagu Deputy Commissioner urging them to halt the progress of the road works. "Patti and Todikana are at the core of the Talacauvery Wildlife Sanctuary and such unilateral activities without complete approval on completion of the statutorily mandated procedure (both under Forest Conservation Act and Wild Life Protection Act)," the letter stated.

The letter added that they would be forced to move the Courts and the officers who have given approval to the project would face legal consequences.

Kadamakallu-Subramanya Road

A similar attempt was made in 2008 to bulldoze and form a new road. The PWD had submitted a proposal for the diversion of 32-acre forest land to develop Madikeri-Kadamakallu-Subramanya Road at a cost of Rs.10 crore. A total of 11 km stretch (Vanachalu to Kadamakallu) would pass through Kadamakallu Reserve Forest, a part of Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary.

This particular road works was rejected by the Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee (CEC). The CEC, which looked into a complaint filed by Air Marshal K.C. Cariappa (retd.), found that the works was in violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the orders of the Court and had directed the then Chief Secretary (CS), who had accepted that the violations had taken place, to take action against officials responsible, and even suggested that action should be taken against three elected representatives who had instigated the illegal road works.

Proceedings against DC, Conservator

"Proceedings were also initiated against the then Deputy Commissioner, the then Conservator of Forests and three elected representatives of Kodagu District and the matter is sub-judice. Also, it has been reiterated by the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) that new roads shall not be proposed inside National Parks and Sanctuaries," the letter stated.

The Trustees of Wildlife First have pointed out that there is evidence that work of embedding concrete pillars after survey, marking of trees for felling have been carried out on Patti-Todikana road in violation of law and orders of the Supreme Court.

Irreparable damage to pristine forests

Speaking to *Star of Mysore*, Praveen Bhargav, who is involved in wildlife conservation activities since 1982 and Founder of Conservation India, a conservation group focused on conservation education activities, said that the Patti-Todikana road is not needed and is a wasteful expenditure besides majorly it would cause irreparable damage to pristine forests.

"There is already a road between Sullia, Panathur, Karike and Bhagamandala. This road is being planned as an alternative road, destroying the forests. The Supreme Court and MoEF&CC guidelines are clear and the PWD has claimed that the Patti-Todikana road exists and there is a Right of Way for 12 metres that they are going to improve the same by cutting trees. Actually, there is no road and there is no Right of Way here. The reality is that it is a totally new road that is proposed to be built destroying the Western Ghats in that belt," he said.

ASHA workers launch Statewide stir

Mysuru, May 29- Condemning the assault on ASHA workers, urging for their protection and also to resolve their problems, ASHA workers under the banner of Karnataka Rajya Samyukta ASHA Karyakartheyara Sangha, Mysuru District Committee, along with All India United Trade Unions Centre (AIUTUC) launched their Statewide struggle this morning.

They submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and Health and Family Welfare Minister B. Sriramulu through Assistant Tahsildar Boraiah at the Deputy Commissioner's Office here this morning.

Their demands include punishment to those who had assaulted ASHA workers on COVID-19 duty, adequate compensation to the victims, announcement of special package and a monthly salary of Rs. 10,000 from March, to provide face masks, sanitisers and hand gloves, ban liquor and to take stringent action against those who had assaulted them in a drunken state among others.

Folk artiste murdered

Mandya, May 29 (Nagaiah&KS)- A folk artiste was found murdered in broad daylight at K. Shettihalli near Bharathinagar yesterday morning. The deceased is Raghu (27), a Pooja Kunitha artiste and a resident of K. Shettihalli.

Yesterday at about 10.30 am, Raghu left his house to the field on the outskirts of the village to fetch grass, when the miscreants murdered him by slitting his throat and fled from the spot.

The reason for murder is yet to be known and there are no clues about the killers. Raghu, who had good relationship with everyone, was a State-level Pooja Kunitha artiste and used to participate in the folk dance programmes. Superintendent of Police (SP) Parashuram, ASP Shobharani, Dy. SP Pruthvi and Circle Inspector Shivamallaiah visited the spot and conducted an inspection.

Deceased Raghu's mother Ningamma has lodged a complaint with K.M. Doddi Police, who have registered a case and are investigating.

Girl goes missing

Mysuru, May 29 (KS)- A 17-year-old girl, who had gone to attend nature's call at about 1.30 pm on May 16, has gone missing since then, according to the complaint lodged by the missing girl's mother Shivajamma at Saragur Police Station.

The missing girl is Manuganahalli Rakshitha. She is 5 ft. tall, wheatish complexioned and was wearing a blue coloured top and a black and white coloured pant at the time of going missing.

Those having any information about the missing girl may contact Saragur Sub-Inspector Divya on Mob: 94808-05064.

Power disruption tomorrow

Mysuru, May 29 (KS)- Owing to emergency works taken up by CESC, there will be no power supply between 10 am and 5 pm tomorrow at Nanjumalige Circle, Lakshmipuram, Vidyaranyapuram, Narayana Shastri Road, Kakarawadi, Naala Beedhi, Hosakeri, Agrahara, Thyagaraja Road, Industrial Suburb, Vishweshwaranagar, Krishnamurthypuram, Nachanahalli Palya, Gundu Rao Nagar, Kanakagiri, Ashokapuram, Saraswathipuram, Railway Workshop, Mahadevapura, Ramabainagar, Srirampura, Jayanagar, K.G. Koppal, Shivapura, Adichunchanagiri Road, J.P. Nagar and surrounding areas.

West Bengal-bound Shramik Special leaves Ashokapuram Station carrying 1,520 migrants

SWR Mysuru Division runs 10 Shramik trains till today facilitating 14,066 passengers to reach their homes

Mysuru, May 29- The tenth 'point-to-point' Shramik Special train from South Western Railway (SWR), Mysuru Division, carrying 1,520 migrants, left Ashokapuram (Mysuru) Station today at 1 pm for New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal. This train is being run as per the request of the State Governments of West Bengal and Karnataka. The train comprising 20 LHB coaches is scheduled to reach New Jalpaiguri (2,488 kms) on Sunday (May 31) at 9.30 am.

After scrutiny and verification of documents of the registered migrants belonging to Mysuru, Mandya and Hunsur, the authorities of the State Government completed the mandated screening process before allowing them to board the train.

Meanwhile, the State Government, in association with the Rotary Club of Mysore and Jain Samaj from city provided food and water to the passengers. As per the extant arrangements, the Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is taking care of the catering in the remaining portion of the journey in collaboration with the Railway Divisions in the path of the train.

Six Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel will be escorting the train, end-to-end, to address issues, if any, relating to law and order in co-ordination with the Police of the respective State Governments along the way. Passengers were instructed to compulsory wear face masks and maintain high standards of personal hygiene.

Yesterday also (May 28), a Shramik Special with a total of 1,298 migrants from Hassan and Kodagu districts left for New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal. This was the ninth Shramik from Mysuru Division and third from Hassan. Nodal Officers of Railways and Government of Karnataka coordinated the arrangements for smooth operation of the special train as per the guidelines issued for registration and screening. While the State Government and Railways provided food for the migrants at the starting point, IRCTC is coordinating with various Railway Divisions en route for supply of food.

Indian Railways has been running Shramik Special trains on a daily basis throughout the country to ensure that migrants can travel back to their homes. It has been observed that some people who are availing this service have pre-existing medical conditions which aggravates the risk they face during the COVID-19 pandemic. A few unfortunate cases of deaths related to pre-existing medical conditions while travelling have occurred.

Appeal to persons with co-morbidities

In order to protect the vulnerable persons from COVID-19, in line with Ministry of Home Affairs Order dated 17.5.2020, the Ministry of Railways has appealed that persons with co-morbidities (for example, hypertension, diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases, cancer, immune deficiency conditions), pregnant women, children below the age of 10 years and persons above 65 years of age may avoid travel by rail, except when it is essential.

Helpline: 139 & 138

"Indian Railway Parivaar is working 24X7 to ensure that Rail services are provided to all the citizens of the country needing to travel. But safety of passengers is our biggest concern. So, we seek the co-operation of all citizens in this matter. In case of any distress or emergency please do not hesitate to reach out to your Railway Parivaar and we will help you (Helpline No. 139 & 138)," stated the Railway press release.

It may be noted that Mysuru Division has run 10 Shramik Special trains so far facilitating 14,066 passengers to reach their homes.

Hotel Siddhartha readies a COVID-secure wedding hall

Mysuru, May 29 (RK,PM& BCT)- While the State and Union Governments have released guidelines on how to conduct marriages in COVID times limiting the number of attendees to 50 and imposing restrictions like wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, even wedding managers and wedding venue hosts are gearing up to face a new reality and are modifying their venues to suit the new scenario.

At a time when many traditional wedding halls and choultries are fretting over loss in business due to new restrictions, there are others who are seeing small weddings as an opportunity and are remodelling their business modules like Hotel Siddhartha, owned by Siddhartha Group. The Hotel marriage hall has been converted into a fully secure wedding venue to cater to small weddings with many precautionary measures.

The Hotel Management has adopted effective measures to stop the spread of virus like social distancing, mandatory use of masks and sanitisers. The marriage hall is located on the fourth floor of the Hotel and the precautionary measures begin first before one steps into a lift. Toothpicks are used to press the lift button and only three persons are permitted to go in the lift at any given time. As guests enter the marriage hall on the fourth floor, the Hotel staff are ready with thermal scanners to check the forehead temperature and if any guest shows symptoms of cold and fever, entry is denied. If any guest shows such symptoms, an in-house quarantine facility is available in the Hotel itself and medical help will be extended to such people.

Masks and sanitisers are readily available here if any guest forgets to wear masks. The seating arrangements have been made in such a way that social distancing is strictly followed. The wedding hall is spacious and has good ventilation and the dining hall next to the hall too is designed as per the Government guidelines. Seating arrangements here too follows social distancing norms. After food, individual fingerbowls are supplied to guests so that they do not crowd the hand-wash area.

Utmost care is ensured when the food is served where the Hotel staff is covered with face mask, gloves, shoes, face shield and headcover. Representatives from the Hotel Management will be present at the venue to ensure that rules are strictly followed and guidelines are adhered to.

As per guidelines, people above 65 years of age and children below 10 years and pregnant women are not allowed and notice boards have been displayed. The wedding stage too can be redesigned by the wedding party to suit their requirements. Those who book the hall are told about these guidelines and facilities and only those wedding parties who agree to the conditions are given permission to conduct ceremonies here.

The facilities, precautionary measures and arrangements were demonstrated by P.V. Giri, who owns Siddhartha Group, to media persons and officials from the Mysuru City Corporation through a detailed power-point presentation yesterday. Mayor Tasneem, MCC Health Standing Committee Chairman Gopi, Health Officer Dr. D.G. Nagaraju and others were present.

Commenting on the initiatives taken at the Hotel, Dr. Nagaraju appreciated the Siddhartha Group for ensuring a virus-free atmosphere at a place where people gather for a wedding. "People can fearlessly attend the event here and the MCC too will create awareness regarding this," he said.

Double murder accused on the run finally arrested

Mysuru, May 29 (KS)- Police have arrested the accused in a double murder case that had taken place near Kote Hundi Gate in Jayapura Hobli recently. The arrested is Yogesh, a resident of Kote Hundi.

Yogesh had murdered T. Manjunath and R. Manjunath of Yadahalli village near Kote Hundi recently over petty reasons and had gone absconding. A case was registered at Jayapura Police Station in this regard.

Mysuru Rural Circle Inspector Jeevan and staff, who conducted an operation under the guidance of the Superintendent of Police (SP), finally arrested accused Yogesh near the LIC Office in Bannimantap.

Jayapura Sub-Inspector Mohan, Probationary Sub-Inspector Sadashiva Tippareddy, Assistant Sub-Inspector Jagadish, Vadgalaiah, Ashok, Bhaskar, Vivekraj and Raju took part in the nabbing operation.

Woman gives away Rs. 500 of Rs. 600 monthly pension

(Continued from page 1)

Hearing her plight, a local area leader Mahadev approached Talakadu Manjunath of Rotary Heritage Mysuru to feed the woman as the Club had launched free food distribution — "Annadaana" — in Chennagirikoppalu and other city areas. Manjunath had told the Club volunteers to supply food to a deserving Kamalamma too and she received food packets daily. 15 days back, after Kamalamma received her pension of Rs. 600, she told Mahadev that she wants to donate Rs. 500 for COVID relief food programme and she donated the money telling the Rotary volunteers that she could only contribute that amount.

In a social media post on May 12, D.N. Raghu Raghavendra said, "Today even as we, the members of Rotary Heritage Mysuru were busy in our 'Annadaana' preparations, a seemingly poor, over 70-year-old senior citizen, Kamalamma, walked in to the premise. Our natural expectation was that she might ask us for some food. Even as we extended the food packets to her, she refused. A little hesitatingly, she mustered some courage and took out something hidden behind the clothes and said, I have been watching you guys supplying food to my area for over 30 days now, so I just felt I should give you Rs. 500 from the Rs. 600 monthly pension I receive. It is a small amount, but please accept."

"We were shocked and embarrassed that we offered her food. We were taken aback by her gesture of parting Rs. 500 out Rs. 600 pension she receives and that too in such difficult times. In spite of our several requests to keep the money, she insisted that we accept it which we did out of sheer respect for her," he posted.

"At that moment we felt she is no less than the Tatas, Ambanis, Azim Premji or Narayana Murthy as she was parting with 90 percent of her monthly earnings. We could witness the magnanimity of a mother's heart, however poor she might be. We were truly humbled," the post read.

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Hoteliers anxious

(Continued from page 1)

Sources said that the hoteliers are apprehensive about the guidelines if at all they are allowed to open from June 1. "We do not know what type of guidelines the Centre will issue. If the guidelines are strict like there should be only one person per table, compulsory closing at 7 pm and others, it will not be feasible. All businesses and companies are allowed to conduct business and we too should be allowed," sources from Hotel Association said.

Hoteliers insist that as it is the industry is crippled and the Centre's guidelines must not cripple them further. "Rules and restrictions for an extent is fine. If there are too many restrictions, even food items will be costlier. We will wait for the guidelines and then decide on the future course of action," sources added.

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No ban, but reduction of flights: J.C. Madhuswamy

Bengaluru, May 29 (UNI)- The State Government has requested the Civil Aviation Ministry to reduce the number of flights from Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to Karnataka in view of the high number of COVID-19 cases prevalent there.

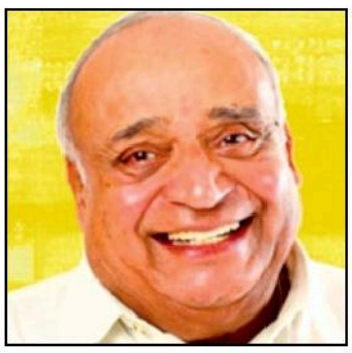
In a clarification issued to media, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs J.C. Madhuswamy has said that Karnataka has not sought for imposing a ban on flights emanating from these places, as reported in some sections of the media.

Karnataka has appealed to the Civil Aviation Ministry to take steps to lessen the air traffic to the State, with the intention that there may not be adequate quarantine facilities if there is huge turnout at a short period, he added. The Minister also said restrictions have been imposed for people coming by road from the States of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat to ensure adequate quarantine facilities.

INS condoles RS MP's death

New Delhi, May 29- On behalf of The Indian Newspaper Society (INS), Shailesh Gupta, President, has condoled the death of Kerala politician M.P. Veerendra Kumar, who passed away due to cardiac arrest at a private hospital in Kozhikode late on Thursday. He was 84.

A Rajya Sabha member and Managing Director of leading Malayalam daily 'Mathrubhumi' Group of Newspapers, Veerendra Kumar donned many hats as a former Union Minister, former PTI Chairman, Past President of the Indian Newspaper Society, a journalist and prolific author on various subjects.



M.P. Veerendra Kumar

He was the recipient of Kendra Sahitya Academy Award, Kerala Sahitya Academy Award and many other such awards. As a Socialist leader he was the voice of the marginalised and weaker sections of the society and was a People's Person.

Shailesh Gupta conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the family members and prayed that the Almighty grant them strength and courage to bear this irreparable loss, according to a press release from Mary Paul, Secretary General, INS.

COVID - 19 UPDATE

MYSURU

Persons observed till date	:	5,782
Persons who have completed 14 days' isolation	:	5,332
Persons isolated in home for 14 days (Inter-State travellers)	:	350
Persons isolated in facility quarantine for 7 days	:	99
Persons isolated in hospital for active cases	:	3
Total samples tested	:	8,529
Samples found negative	:	8,437
Samples found positive (cumulative)	:	94
Persons cured / discharged	:	91
Death toll so far in Mysuru	:	0

MANDYA

Total positive cases in Mandya	:	257
Persons cured / discharged	:	33
Death toll so far in Mandya	:	0

KARNATAKA & INDIA

Total positive cases in Karnataka	:	2,781
Persons cured / discharged	:	894
Death toll so far in Karnataka	:	48
Total active cases in India	:	89,987
Persons cured / discharged	:	71,105
Death toll so far in India	:	4,706

(Note: Mysuru figures as on May 28. Media bulletin for May 29 not available)

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